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2026 TOWN ELECTIONS

For Select Board: Michelle Prior

January 1, 2026 . 9:00 AM — 2 min read

COURTESY PHOTO/MICHELLE PRIOR

What experiences and perspectives would you contribute to the Select Board? Fifteen years on Town Meeting representing Precinct 4, six years on the Finance Committee (Chair FY24), three years on the Selec
including two years as Chair, member of the Audit Advisory Com

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and Retiree Health Insurance Advisory Committee. I have first-hand knowledge of how the town operates and have built effective working relationships with staff and volunteers across a range of departments, committees and boards. In addition to my volunteer roles with the Town, I also served on the Wright Locke Farm Conservancy Board of Directors for five years, so I have experience working with a large non-profit in town.

What are two or three issues facing Winchester that you think are most important and what are your positions on them? Generating additional revenue beyond the residential property tax levy through smart growth including encouraging additional commercial business to locate and operate in Winchester and working with town staff to find areas where town assets can be better monetized or where town fees are below market rates. 2) Maintaining a community where people of all ages and incomes can live and thrive, through Select Board support for housing development that serves residents with various family configurations and provides options for our senior neighbors who wish to stay in Winchester and age in place. 3) Continuing to work across boards and committees to increase communication and deliver good customer service to our residents.

How would you decide which town services to cut or reduce if voters reject a tax override this spring? The Town Manager, School Superintendent, and Town Meeting will likely be the final decision makers on which services to cut or reduce. As a Select Board member, I would advise the Town Manager to review unfilled positions and determine if those positions should remain in the budget or be removed, offer incentives for staff who may be retirement age eligible, and/or explore modest reductions in staffing or operating hours for town departments that can function with a smaller workforce.

What would you do to bring in more revenue without raising residential property taxes? As the Vice Chair of the State of the Town Comm
asked to lead the non-property tax revenue workstream. I personally

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researched and compared hundreds of fees charged by various town departments and identified 60-100 fees that can potentially be adjusted to align with those of our peers. I led the effort to expand access to our Transfer Station to outside haulers at a higher rate than that which we charge our local commercial haulers. I would also continue to pursue lease opportunities for town assets e.g., lease roof space on buildings to solar providers and collect annual fees.

Why should voters elect you to the Select Board? I have 3 years of experience on the Board, and as Select Board Chair for the past two years, I've worked with Town department heads, the Superintendent and School Committee, the Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee, Planning Board and dozens of other volunteer committees, appointed boards and stakeholders. I am seeking a second term to: build on the work begun in my first term to build a long-term financial plan for the town; support the new Town Manager; continue to communicate the good work of our staff to residents, Town Meeting Members and the public; and help facilitate renewable energy and other cost savings initiatives across town.

How would you like voters to contact you? Contact: michelle.prior@verizon.net · electmichelleprior.com

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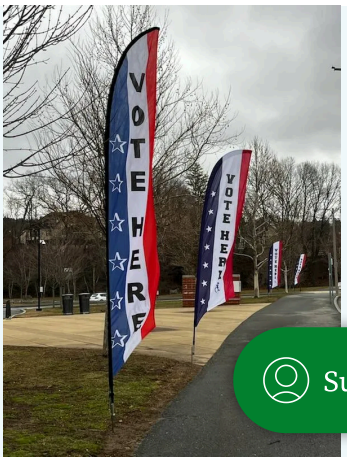

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NEWS

John Bellaire, 22, among youngest townwide winners in Winchester history

He won all eight precincts after a door-to-door campaign that emphasized direct voter contact over institutional backing.

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 25, 2026

2026 TOWN ELECTIONS

13 YEARS OF DATA, ONE SATURDAY: Takeaways from Winchester's override vote and the races that surrounded it

Winchester News reviewed precinct-level election results from every annual town election since 2014 — 13 years of data covering turnout, ballot questions, Select Board races, School Committee contests and Planning Board results — and compared them against the March 21 preliminary numbers. The 2026 results have not yet been certified by Town

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 25, 2026

NEWS

With override rejected, Winchester shifts from campaigning to budget planning

After Winchester voters rejected an $11.5 million Proposition 2 1/2 override on Election Day, March 21, the governing question in town has shifted from persuasion to arithmetic. Select Board member Bill McGonigle, who served on the Yes for Winchester campaign, said the defeat has changed how he approaches

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 25, 2026

NEWS

Voters fill Town Meeting seats across Winchester; four incumbents unseated

The biggest shakeup came in Precinct 7, where two officeholders lost in an 11-person contest, matching Precinct 4 for the busiest race.

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 21, 2026

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Winchester ZBA waives town regulations to move Washington/Swanton project along

Town officials have approved waivers of regulations for a residential/commercial development project at Washington and Swanton streets. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on March 19 approved the waivers for a 40B project at 278-292 Washington St. and 12 and 16-20 Swanton St. in a special meeting preceding a

NEIL ZOLOT | CORRESPONDENT

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NEWS

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WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 25, 2026

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Network for Social Justice to celebrate 35th anniversary

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Network For Social Justice turns 35 this spring! There will be a celebration on Saturday, April 11, from 7-9:30 p.m., at the Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St., Winchester. Connect with your local friends and neighbors as

March 25, 2026

Winchester Community Music School presents Jazz Jam Session

The following was submitted by the Winchester Community Music School: On Saturday, March 28, join the community at Winchester Community Music School, 407 Highland Ave., for a Jazz Jam Session, an afternoon of fun, spontaneous jazz playing, beginning at 3 p.m. Instrumentalists and vocalists of all skill levels are

March 25, 2026

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